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31 December 1968

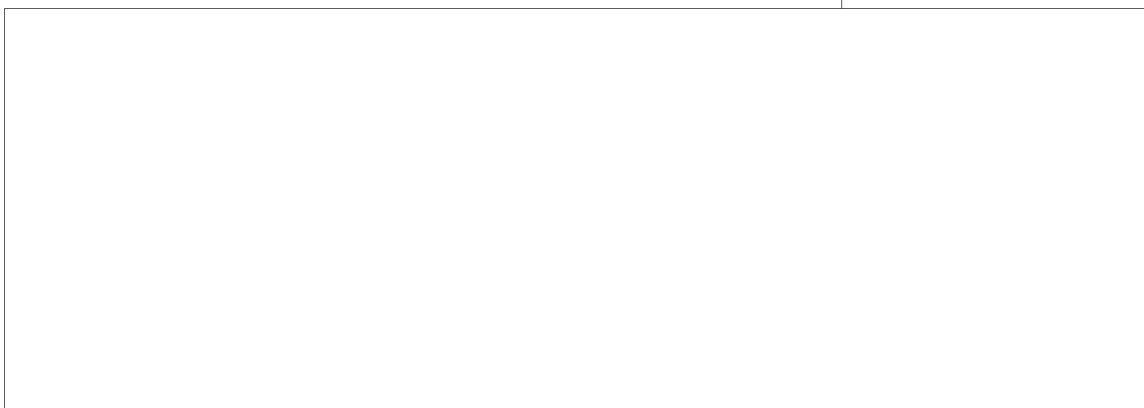
MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Cambodian Involvement in the Supply of Arms and Ammunition to Communist Forces in South Vietnam

REFERENCE: Memorandum, dated 31 October 1968, Cambodia as a Source of VC/NVA Arms and Ammunition

1. Pursuant to a request by Assistant Secretary William P. Bundy and with the approval of the DCI, the undersigned led a team composed of members of CIA, DIA, and INR in visits to CINCPAC and Saigon during the period 29 November - 17 December to make a further study of the reference subject.

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2. In Saigon, MACV's J-2 Staff presented the team with a full series of briefings describing the available intelligence, their collection efforts, and their conclusions with respect to

JCS review completed.

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S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

Cambodian involvement in the supply of arms and ammunition to Communist Forces in South Vietnam. The team also had some opportunity to examine MACV's intelligence holdings, to review methodology with respect to estimates of munitions imports into Sihanoukville, and to discuss problems relating to the evaluation of intelligence reports from various sources.

3. The team was provided excellent support and extended full courtesies at every stop, and was particularly appreciative of the efforts made at MACV and by US forces in the field (CG, 1st Air Cav Div, CG 25th Infantry Div, and the Senior Advisor, IV Corps) to inform us of their views and of the situation as seen in the field.

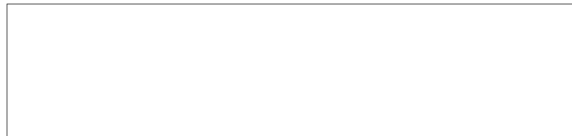
4. The conclusions, discussions, and recommendations in the attached memorandum were prepared by the team after a thorough review of the information available in Washington and in the field. Individual members of the team were not bound by the positions of their respective agencies, and there was no requirement for the members of the group to reach agreed conclusions among themselves.

- 2 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

5. It should be noted that the conclusions of the team as expressed in the attached paper represent a change from those expressed in the earlier reference memorandum. In particular, the involvement of elements of the Cambodian Army in something more than "small-scale" smuggling of arms to the Communists is accepted and it is suggested that Sihanouk himself is probably aware of this arms traffic. But certain essential differences remain between the position of this paper and that of J-2 MACV. These involve the quantities of arms moving through Sihanoukville to Vietnam, the relationship between arms deliveries to Sihanoukville and Cambodian military requirements, and the extent to which Communist Forces have been denied access to other routes of supply, notably the overland route through Laos.



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S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

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CONCLUSIONS

A. There is no significant body of intelligence data available in the field that has not been disseminated to Washington. To the extent that there are differences of view as to the sources of arms and ammunition supplied to Communist forces in II, III, and IV Corps, they arise in the process of evaluation and analysis of commonly shared information.

B. There has been no question that Communist forces make extensive use of Cambodian territory along the Vietnamese border for the storage of arms and ammunition and other supplies, and for sanctuary. The Communists move at will across and along much of the Vietnamese-Cambodian border from the tri-border area in the north southward to the Gulf of Siam. There is also

S-E-C-R-E-T

25X1

S-E-C-R-E-T

no question that the Cambodian Army has been involved in the shipment of Cambodian rice and other non-lethal supplies to Vietnamese Communist forces along the border.

C. There is now little remaining doubt that elements of the Cambodian Army are engaged, on an organized basis, in the shipment to arms to the Communists in South Vietnam. The available evidence does not, however, permit confident estimates on the quantities involved in these arms shipments to the Communists.

D. The elements involved in this complicity include high-ranking Cambodian Army officers

Their

activities are probably known to Sihanouk. The available evidence, however, is inadequate to establish the existence of a high-level agreement between Sihanouk and the Communists for the delivery of arms to the Communists.

E. Positive information relating to the movement of arms southward via the overland route from the tri-border area in southern Laos to the border regions of III Corps is limited. We cannot quantify on the basis of evidence currently available the amount of arms and ammunition that moves south from the

-2-

S-E-C-R-E-T

25X1

S-E-C-R-E-T

tri-border area. There is, however, a long established and extensive trail network, which is being continuously improved, extending southward along the border to III Corps. Communist forces are present along the entire network. CIA/DIA analysis shows that sufficient supplies to support southern II Corps and III Corps reached the tri-border area from the north in both 1967 and 1968. We believe that all the evidence -- efforts to improve roads and trails, shipments south to the tri-border area, a few reports of logistic activity along the trails, and use of the trails for personnel movements -- is sufficient to indicate continuing reliance on the overland route for the movement of some arms and ammunition.

F. In addition to the overland route and Cambodian Army sources, the Communists appear to obtain some arms by smuggling over the Cambodian coast east of Kampot and by occasional penetrations of Market Time patrols in the coastal waters of South Vietnam.

G. In sum, we believe that Communist forces in III and IV Corps depend on a variety of routes for their arms supply. None of them are ideal. The overland route is expensive in terms of construction and maintenance efforts and losses of men

-3-

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

and supplies due to bombing; the route through Sihanoukville is controlled by the Cambodian authorities and thus subject to disruption; smuggling over the Cambodian beaches may depend on bribing local Cambodian officials; penetrating Market Time is not possible on a large scale.

H. The evidence available does not offer positive proof that any one of these routes now carries the bulk of the required arms and ammunition to IV, III, and southern II corps. All things considered, however, we believe that the overland route is the basic channel for the movement of arms and ammunition to Communist forces, not only in I and II Corps, but also in III Corps.* The Communists will almost certainly continue to make every effort to maintain and increase its capacity.

* Team member [] believes that the evidence available does not justify the judgment that the overland route is now the "basic" channel for the movement of arms and ammunition to Communist forces in III corps.

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

DISCUSSION

A. Cambodian Involvement in the Supply of Arms and Ammunition to Communist Forces in South Vietnam

1. Good evidence of Cambodian Army (FARK) complicity in the shipment of food, other non-lethal supplies, and some arms to the Communists in South Vietnam has long been available. Within the past few months reports, particularly from CIA sources, have built up a fairly clear and consistent picture of an organization (involving identified FARK officers, Chinese businessmen and the

25X1 which controls these activities. Recent reporting has clearly established that arms and ammunition are included in the goods shipped to South Vietnam, with the FARK depot at Kompong Speu apparently being the major trans-shipment point. These reports do not provide any firm basis, however, for estimating the quantities involved, or, in many cases for differentiating between shipments of arms and other types of supplies.

2. It seems probable that Sihanouk is aware of FARK's activities; but it is not clear that shipments of arms and ammunition to the Communists have Sihanouk's positive blessing, represent official policy, or rest on an understanding between

-5-

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

Sihanouk and Peking or Hanoi. Until more conclusive evidence of an agreement is obtained we must reserve judgment on Sihanouk's role.

3. In theory, it should be possible to estimate the tonnages of arms and ammunition reaching the Communists through Sihanoukville by establishing the amounts off-loaded at the port and subtracting Cambodian military requirements. The residual would be the portion ear-marked for the Communists and this figure could be cross-checked with intelligence reports on truck movements of arms and ammunition to the borders of South Vietnam.

4. J-2 MACV is convinced that it has sufficient intelligence, to perform these calculations and to reach firm conclusions. MACV's most recent compilation shows that the "probable" tonnage of "munitions" delivered to Sihanoukville during the 12 month period ending 30 September 1968 totaled 10,668 tons. For the same period, J-2 MACV shows 10,035 tons of "suspected" ordnance delivered by truck from Cambodia to the border areas in II, III, and IV Corps.

25X1

- 6 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

5. These figures would provide an average of 28 tons per day for Communist forces in the areas concerned, an amount more than double the estimated external requirements for arms and ammunition. It is conceivable that Communist military planning and the logistic system, which depends on stockpiles cached in advance of military operations, produces requirements considerably in excess of actual expenditures.


25X1

- 7 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

7. Studies done in CIA suggest a minimum figure of 16-1700 tons of arms and ammunition for the same 21 month period for which MACV previously cited imports of over 13,000 tons. The CIA figure is almost certainly low; with "possible" tonnages added, it might reach 7-8,000 tons.



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- 8 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

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B. The Overland Route

10. MACV does not believe that sufficient supplies have been moving overland from the north into southern Laos to meet the requirements of Communist forces in IV, III or southern II Corps. In addition, they tend to take the lack of positive evidence of supply movements southward from the tri-border area as proof of the absence of any such movement on any scale.

- 9 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

11. We differ substantially with MACV's estimate of the tonnages moved into southern Laos over the past year even though the basic intelligence inputs -- road watch and pilot sightings of trucks -- appears to be basically the same. Our computations result in tonnages moved to southern Laos over the past year which are more than adequate to support Communist requirements in III and southern II Corps for arms and ammunition.

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13. There is, however, a long established trail network extending southward along the border to III Corps. We have evidence of continuing efforts to improve these trails and road segments on both sides of the border.

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- 10 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

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In view of the

fact that supplies are known to move inside South Vietnam through areas strongly invested by US/ARVN forces without detection, the lack of more indications of supply movements along the Communist controlled border area hardly seems conclusive.

14. The evidence available does not offer positive proof that the overland route is the primary source of supply. But we are quite certain that ^a/functioning logistic system exists south of the tri-border area and that it has the capacity, in terms of manpower and trails, to move the tonnages necessary to meet Communist requirements in III and southern II Corps.

C. Other Sources of Arms and Ammunition

15. In March 1968 the Cambodian Navy intercepted a junk carrying members of the Viet Cong and loaded with arms and ammunition. It seems almost certain that the ship intended to off-load somewhere on the Cambodian coast east of Kep and that its cargo would then have moved across the border into IV Corps.

25X1

- 11 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

25X1

16. We also believe that some arms continue to enter South Vietnam directly on small junks which evade Market Time patrols. This conclusion runs counter to some claims for the near total effectiveness of Market Time, but there are enough reports

on instances of sea-borne infiltration to convince us that it still goes on at some level.

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D. Actions and Recommendations

17. As a result of the increased interest in the Cambodian problem, the intelligence effort, on both the collection and analytical sides, has been intensified. For example, MACV has restructured and intensified its collection efforts against Cambodia under a newly instituted program called BALCKBEARD (U). This program will utilize all available resources including photography, Special Forces assets, and third country nationals.

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- 12 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

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S-E-C-R-E-T

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19. Continuing attention to the subject of Cambodian complicity and to the question of the volume of supplies moving over particular routes is clearly indicated and necessary. We urge that all USIB Agencies provide sufficient priority to the problem to permit continuous attention to both the collection and the analytical effort.

- 15 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

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